

**Arkansas Early Childhood Commission**  
**January 15, 2013**  
**10:00 am**  
**Minutes**

*Members Present:* Evelyn Bass, Jackie Dedman, Diane Green, Gene Gregory, Nicki Hammontree, Debbie Malone, Dr. Chad Rodgers, Jody Veit-Edrington, Dr. Haley Vo, Dr. Jill Fussell, Rhonda Ahrent, and Patricia Connor (on behalf of Dr. Tracy Tucker).

*Members Absent:* Patricia Lucas, Amy Denton, Shirley Pulliam, Missy Duke, Janice Dancer, and Marilyn Chambers.

**I. Call to Order/Reading of Mission Statement**

Jackie Dedman, Chair, called the January 2013 meeting of the AECC to order at 10:00 a.m. A quorum of members was present. Jackie Dedman read the mission statement. Members and guests introduced themselves.

**II. Approval of Minutes**

Minutes from the October 2012 meeting were reviewed. Jody Veit-Edrington made a motion to accept the minutes. Gene Gregory seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**III. Old Business**

**October Retreat/Update on Goals, Objectives, and Measureables**

At the retreat, Jackie Dedman was approved as chair for the Commission. Nickie Hammontree was approved as co-chair for the Commission.

A sixth goal was added to the previous five goals that were established in 2009. Tonya indicated the need for a small committee to focus on completing the strategic plan. A small team from DCCECE staff will be included to assist with writing and printing.

Jackie Dedman asked for volunteers to serve on this committee. Jody Veit-Edrington, Nickie Hammontree, Rhonda Ahrent, and Jackie Dedman volunteered to be the representatives for the Goals & Measurables committee. Division staff will be added as well. Finalization of the goals and strategies are to be completed by the April meeting.

**ARCECEAM Update**

Jackie Dedman reported on ARCECEAM (Arkansas Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Assessment Model). A handout was given to all members of the commission. ARCECEAM is a task force of 25 members who meet monthly. The model incorporates four distinct areas

that look at all early childhood programs in Arkansas on how we can work on the assessment piece to gather data. The model includes: Strong Partnerships and Collaboration; Aligned Systems; Integrated Services; and Quality Assurance. The assessment selected will blend with any existing curriculums that are currently being used in programs. Jackie stated that voucher programs, ABC, Head Start, HIPPY, and CHMS will all use the same assessment. Quality outcomes for all children is the goal for this model.

Ava Coleman addressed the assessment piece. The assessment will cover ages birth to 8 years with an immediate emphasis placed on children 3-5. The outcome for the early childhood assessment is to be able to connect data by identifying and tracking children's progress. The next meeting on ARCECEAM will be on January 23, 2013, to narrow down the assessments.

Jackie commented that the taskforce will update the commission members each quarter.

### **Asset Mapping Update**

Mark Story stated that the Asset Mapping is close to realization. A UAT (User Authorized Testing) link will be available soon for commission members to test on January 22, 2013. The format of the Asset Mapping hasn't changed much. The directions and search method are easier to navigate. UAMS was a key partner with establishing Asset Mapping. Topics on counseling, health related issues, searching for child care, and information on school districts and legislative districts are a few topics that are searchable on the site. In March 2013, Asset Mapping will launch.

Jackie Dedman asked how the Asset Mapping would be launched. Mark Story stated that providers and partners will be the key, because some parents may not have internet access. Mark noted that Division staff will also be trained.

Paige Cox asked if it will be accessible on a mobile site. Mark Story stated it will be an enhancement in the plans for it to be mobile.

### **Licensing Update**

Kelli Hilburn reported on licensing regulations. She stated that AECC goal one is covered in this area and within a few weeks, recommendations will be given. One area that licensing staff has been reviewing is reducing ratios in the infant/toddler area. Staff are reviewing regulations of the states that ranked within the top five. Arkansas is in the bottom ten.

Other areas, mentioned by Kelli, that are under review include: more limits on screen time; defining meaningful interaction; prohibiting telephones in the classroom; getting consent from parents for photography/video of children; physical fitness activities for young children; staff immunizations; professional development issues that include being registered with TAPP, pre-service training, required training for assistant directors; FBI/child maltreatment requirements; gross motor playground area for infants/toddlers; outside shade requirements; and prohibiting ball pits and wading pools. Kelli mentioned the following names of licensing staff working on the areas of review: Mary Oliver, Kim Chapman, Cindy Pyle, Connie Curry, Doug Williams, and Kelli herself. Caring for Our Children and USDA are two sources that licensing staff have reviewed.

#### **IV. New Business**

##### **AECC Policies and Procedures**

Jackie Dedman discussed the responsibilities of AECC and the need to review policies/procedures that have not been updated since 1999. Jackie requested volunteers to serve. Jackie Dedman, Tonya Russell, Gene Gregory, and Nickie Hammontree agreed to serve on a committee to review AECC Policies and Procedures.

##### **Commission Members Term Limits & Updates**

Jackie Dedman stated that there are slots that need to be filled. These include a HIPPIY representative, parent representative, and a Department of Health representative among others. Jackie will work with Trena and Tonya to send letters to the appropriate individuals/agencies to assist in filling the slots.

Tonya Russell suggested that members whose terms are scheduled to expire in July 2013 and who are appointed by the Governor can visit the Secretary of State website and start the required paperwork prior to July. Tonya also advised members to update any email/address changes with Trena Bronson.

##### **School Readiness in Arkansas**

Tonya Russell stated she attended the Arkansas School Readiness Meeting held in conjunction with the Region VI Head Start Conference in Rogers in the fall. The meeting was a success with local teams who attended. Jackie shared the next steps. She is developing an Early Childhood Educators Forum and provided a handout with general instructions. The Forum would allow questions and responses as well as early childhood resource information related to school readiness and other state updates. A document (Association of Measurement) has been established that aligns the Early Childhood Framework and Common Core State

Standards. Tonya noted that while Common Core covers language arts and math, the Early Childhood Frameworks covers more domains of development including physical and social/emotional. Training on how these standards are aligned is developed and training will begin this month (January). Tonya stated next year Common Core will be implemented in all grades K-12.

Tonya discussed that at the School Readiness meeting, team members requested that the state review the current tool (Kindergarten Readiness Checklist) utilized to assess incoming kindergarten students. The Early Learning Inventory was selected by a group of early childhood and education stakeholders when a state law was passed that required that the state would have one tool for schools to implement. The tool was one of only a few available at the time and aligned with the state's early childhood and K-4 standards. The assessment for grades K-12 is under review. DCCECE will work with the Department of Education to align early childhood assessment with K-3.

ADE is reviewing the kindergarten indicators. Tonya and Jackie are working with Dr. Tracy Tucker. One follow up item from the school readiness teams is to define "school readiness" in AR. Tonya suggested that a few members from AECC may want to be included.

Rhonda Ahrent asked what is being done for the children who fail. Patricia Connor representing ADE for Dr. Tucker answered the question and stated that teachers receive the results and develop an Academic Improvement Plan for the child(ren) until they are able to reach the grade level.

Tonya shared data from the Arkansas Research Center on children who attended ABC vs. similar income children who did not. Children in ABC programs scored 8-12 points higher on the Early Learning Inventory than their peers who did not attend an ABC program.

Jackie Dedman discussed the handout given. The Early Childhood Educators Forum will begin February 1, 2013 and hosted at the Head Start State Collaboration Office. This will be an exciting way to communicate to the public regarding school readiness. A link can be added to the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education's website and the AR Department of Education's website when it becomes available. School Readiness teams can also share information at the local level.

Jackie Dedman called for a School Readiness Team of volunteers from members of the commission. The task for the team is to assist with revisions to the revised Kindergarten Readiness Indicator Checklist and to define the following terms: screening, school readiness, and assessment. Volunteers to serve include: Jody Veit-Edrington, Dr. Chad Rogers,

Debbie Malone, and Evelyn Bass. Additional volunteers will need to be added before April's commission meeting. Tonya noted that DCCECE can assist. Jody Veit-Edrington suggested kindergarten teachers. Rhonda Ahrent suggested school counselors. Tonya suggested that Ava Coleman (a parent) be a part of this task force as well.

## **Other Business**

### **Standing Committee Reports**

Jackie Dedman (chair) shared that the standing committees will be placed on the AECC's agenda for each meeting to share updates of the committee's work.

## **V. Summary/Announcements**

- **PEW Research**

Pew Research released that the state of Arkansas received a grade of D on the four indicators for Oral Health in relation to dental sealants.

- **AR MOM (Arkansas Mission of Mercy)**

Jackie Dedman gave a brief overview of the ARMOM program. several dentists come together to set up in various communities for adults and children to receive dental service free of charge. The purpose is to serve participants who do not have dental insurance. Jackie noted that 2,400 people were served at the Jonesboro event in 2011. Jackie noted that Henderson State University in Arkadelphia will be hosting an event on May 31<sup>st</sup> and June 1<sup>st</sup>. Jackie mentioned that the program is in need of volunteers to serve. Interested persons can visit the ARMOM website to volunteer.

- Tonya Russell stated that the legislative session started last night (January 14, 2013). She mentioned that there are 42 new members. Tonya encouraged members of the AECC to reach out to their local legislators. Chairs for House of Education are James McLean and Ann Clemmer. Chairs for Senate Ed are Johnny Key and Joyce Elliot.

## **VII. Next Meeting**

-April 16, 2013 at 10:00 a.m.

## **VIII. Request for Adjournment**

A motion was made to adjourn by Dr. Chad Rogers and seconded by Nickie Hammontree. The meeting was adjourned at 11:11 a.m.